

Asking for help

We all have good days and bad days, and sometimes we experience tough times when we can't solve our problems by ourselves. Sharing the load with someone else can really help.

Last year more than 55,000 Western Australians called Lifeline WA about their concerns and thousands more will call this year. Often these calls are related to family and relationship issues, grief, depression, financial problems, loneliness, isolation, stress and drug and alcohol problems or mental health issues.

Going through a difficult situation alone can be stressful, confusing and exhausting. Asking for help is an important step to improving wellbeing. But for many there are barriers to overcome first, and typical thought patterns may include:

- Thinking a problem will go away by itself
- Being embarrassed or afraid to ask for help
- Thinking you should be able to cope without help
- Thinking no one wants to help or will understand
- Thinking things aren't bad enough to seek help
- Not knowing where to find help
- A lack of support services nearby
- Thinking you'll be judged
- Thinking help is too expensive/time consuming

It is courageous to recognise and ask for help if you need it for any sort of problem. Sharing your problems with someone can help you find solutions, ways to cope and a different perspective. It may also help you feel less stressed, a sense of relief at having shared your thoughts and feelings and indeed, may prevent a problem from getting bigger.

So where do you start?

Help-seeking is the process of finding and receiving support from others. You may need to try different sources of help until you find what works best for you.

- Your GP can help with physical health problems, as well as mental health and stress. They can also refer you to other health professionals, support groups and useful resources.
- Friends and family know you and often understand your situation. They can provide emotional and practical support, advice and referrals to other sources of help.
- Phone helplines like Lifeline WA on 13 11 14 have highly skilled crisis supporters who will listen to you while you explain your situation, provide immediate support, assist to clarify options and choices available to you and provide you with referral information for other services in your local area.
- Experts and professionals – psychologists, counsellors, financial advisors, legal professionals, ministers, career advisors, teachers. You may need a referral from your GP to visit some of these professionals. Some may provide low or no cost services.



Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.

- Books, magazines and online resources - visit your local bookstore, library or community centre to find written resources on physical/mental health, relationship problems and other personal issues.
- Internet – a useful starting point for information and advice, including links to local professionals and resources.

Sometimes it helps to know that someone is listening, and you never have to be alone. Lifeline WA connects people with care and compassion and during their time of need.

Please call Lifeline WA on 13 11 14 if you, or someone you know, needs crisis support. For more information please visit www.lifelinewa.org.au